EZEKIEL
GILMAN
ROBINSON

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

ON

EZEKIEL GILMAN ROBINSON

SOMETIME PRESIDENT OF BROWN UNIVERSITY

DELIVERED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY

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BY

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SECRETARY OF THE CORPORATION

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ADDRESS.

"NO man's life ought to be written until twenty years after his death." These words fall from the lips of Frederic Denison Maurice, as he bravely seeks to fulfil his mission in the midst of misunderstanding and in the face of prejudice; and the general correctness of the judgment thus expressed we are forced to admit. In order to determine a man's proper place in relation to great historic movements, in order to appreciate his contributions to the advancement of mankind, yes, in order to a just estimate of his character as a whole, we must wait until the mind is free from personal prejudice, favorable or unfavorable, and until the ulterior consequences of words and deeds have had time to appear. But if for the justest estimate of a man's character we must call in the assistance of time, we need not always wait for a score of years, or even for a decade, before we pay tribute to the influence of a life which has poured itself into other lives, and made those lives more abundant. Such testimony may be given at any time, and ought to be given when the impression is fresh on the memory, for no biographer or historian of the future can justly estimate the influence of a man's life on the world without weighing the testimony of those who felt that life as a vital inspiration in their own.

So to-day, coming as representatives of the University into whose abiding life our honored President so generously transfused his own, entering a building which is at once a beautiful memorial of one of his students, and a substantial memento of his own efficient service, gathered in a hall where the

fathers whose company he has joined hover as a cloud of witnesses above those who are still running the race which he has finished, we would give expression to our high estimate of his character, and pay our cordial tribute to the inspiration of his life; assured that whether or not the verdict of our judgment be modified by the biographer of the future, the testimony of our experience cannot be impeached, as we gratefully confess, Because he lived we live more abundantly.

It is a long life which passes under review. To the college student of to-day it is a far cry back to the year in which Andrew Jackson ended our war with England by his famous victory at New Orleans, and in which the allied forces of Europe struck their final blow against Napoleon on the field of Waterloo; and yet it was midway between these two events that Ezekiel Gilman Robinson was born at Attleboro, Mass., on March 23d, 1815. Born on a New England farm, he inherited from New England stock Puritan will and Puritan conscience, and, at the same time, Puritan dislike of demonstrative emotion. On this farm, and in his solitary walks to and from school in Pawtucket, there was awakened and nourished that love of nature which, he said, under proper influences might have been developed into "a permanent bent of taste to natural science." Here too was begun that acquaintance with the affairs of the farm and the garden, which occasionally surprised his learned friends who thought he was familiar with abstract themes only, and which made it almost impossible to convince a farmer at the State Fair that the old gentleman who had so intelligently referred to the good points of his cattle was indeed the President of Brown University.

It was not his good fortune to begin his life in a literary atmosphere, or to spend any of his earlier days in tumbling about in a library. He lost his father at an early age, and his mother was left with an encumbered estate and four children, of whom he was the youngest. His early instruction was poor,

and what was bad in itself was made worse by reason of frequent changes. Now he attends school in Pawtucket, and again in Attleboro; at one time he is at Day's Academy in Wrentham, and afterwards studies at two different times in Pawtucket, and goes twice to New Hampton, N. H., where he finally prepares for college. Whether his teachers were really so poorly equipped as they seemed to him when looking back from his elevated point of observation, or so exceptionally stupid as they were described by him in his forcible language, it is doubtless true that they were lamentably incompetent. His first enthusiasm in study was awakened by a fellow student, who, prevented from entering college by some calamity in his family, had returned to New Hampton to review his studies, and who encouraged the future college president to resume the study of Latin which he had abandoned, and to renew his purpose to go to college.

In the first term of his college course, interrupted in his work by sickness, and discouraged by his manifest inferiority to classmates who had been more thoroughly prepared, he seemed to lose ambition. The only enthusiasms awakened by his college instructors were received from Professor H. B. Hackett in Latin and from President Wayland in Ethics. But if he received little from some of his teachers, he came under a strong educational influence through his connection with the debating society of which he was an enthusiastic and prominent member. A member of an unusually talented class, confronted by foemen worthy of his steel, he was obliged to wrestle hard on this arena in order to gain and hold the palm. Dr. Robinson always entertained a high appreciation of the educational value of these college debating societies, and so late as when University Hall was renovated he expressed the hope that the two enlarged rooms with galleries might be used by the students for practice in public debate. If, in his college days, we discover little evidence of the severe application of later life,

we find two bits of evidence which are prophetic of the future career. In the enthusiastic work of the debating society we discover the prophecy of the Socratic teacher and the great pulpit orator; while in the choice of theme for Commencement, "The Value of Metaphysical Speculations," we detect the mental bias which was followed through scores of years of philosophic stud y.

At the close of his college career he spent a year in post-graduate study, taking up the study of German with Professor Hackett. After this year, which he terms "a year of indecision and semi-idleness," he determined to study theology in preparation for the Christian ministry. Then it was that 'Duty whispered low, Thou must, and the youth replied, I can.' Then, according to his own testimony, he "went to work in earnest with a will and a purpose, giving his days to prescribed work, reserving an hour or two for German and associated readings with fellow students, and devoting his evenings to philosophy and literature." At Newton Theological Institution, where he studied from 1839 till 1842, he found himself in contact with two most stimulating instructors. He followed Dr. Hackett to the institution, in admiration of his exact scholarship, and still breathed his enthusiasm; while the extended learning and suggestive method of Dr. Barnas Sears gave impulse and direction to those theological studies which bore so abundant fruit to the delight and profit of his own pupils in later days.

After graduating from Newton in 1842, Mr. Robinson was ordained and settled as pastor of a Baptist church in Norfolk, Va. During this pastorate he received leave of absence from his church in order to serve for the eight months of an academic year as chaplain of the University of Virginia.

Leaving Virginia in 1845, from October in that year to September, 1846, he was the pastor of the Old Cambridge Baptist Church in Cambridge, Mass. Here he lived under the shadow of Harvard University, and preached in an edifice built

on land which had been deeded to the church by the college authorities. The scholar was now in most congenial surroundings; but the call came to leave the pastorate and to devote himself to the instruction of students for the ministry. He therefore resigned at Cambridge in order to become Professor of Biblical Interpretation in the Western Baptist Theological Institute at Covington, Ky. Owing in large part to the strained relations between North and South relative to the subject of slavery, this connection was terminated after two or three years of service, and Mr. Robinson again entered the pastorate in 1850, in the service of the Ninth Street Baptist Church of Cincinnati, O. Here his reputation as a great pulpit orator was firmly established. He became the foremost preacher of the city, and his reputation was rapidly extending throughout the country. But the man was coveted for other positions, and having received an invitation to accept the chair of Theology in the recently established seminary at Rochester, N. Y., he after three years of ministerial service again left the pastorate for the professor's chair.

Although, after leaving Cincinnati, Dr. Robinson never re-entered the pastorate, he continued to preach up to the time of his death. He loved the work of the preacher, he honored the preacher's office, and in that office he was conspicuously successful. His sermons in Cincinnati and Rochester on Modern Skepticism made deep and lasting impressions on the intelligent citizens who came in large numbers to hear them; and throughout his life he was an attractive, instructive, and inspiring preacher. His pulpit presence was striking and effective. Tall, erect, broad-shouldered, with an intellectual cast of countenance made venerable by the hoary locks which even in the prime of manhood were prematurely gray, his words gained weight from his physical stature and his dignified demeanor. His conduct of worship was impressive and memorable. Many recall his simple, unaffected, but remarkably illuminating reading of the

Scriptures; his reverent, earnest, and unstereotyped prayers; as well as his quiet, dignified, but strenuously earnest proclamation of the truth. But it was in the sermon that the powerful personality came into fullest manifestation. So potent was the personality of the man, and so strong his personal magnetism, that his whole manner, though unconsciously observed, is clearly photographed on the memory. Leaning over the desk and resting his hands on either side of the Bible, he slowly and distinctly reads the text; then, removing his eye-glasses and assuming an erect position, with shoulders thrown back and chest expanded, after a brief silence, in slow and measured tones, he gives utterance to some short and pithy sentence. Having taken firm position, he slowly continues his march of progress until the proposition is announced and the analytical discussion begun. Thus far the preacher seems to have been feeling his way. Apart from the physical effort of articulation, the mind is well nigh the exclusive factor in the discourse; the orator has not yet been aroused; gestures have been few; the left hand has again and again toyed with the button of the trousers' pocket, but the preacher is still conscious of proprieties and restrains it from entering. But as the discourse advances and the thought unfolds, the manner becomes more animated; and occasionally at some one point in the discourse, as the man becomes profoundly interested in his theme, and the orator thrills under the magnetic response of his congregation, the soul takes fire and carries the body with it in its mighty onward rush. The left hand, no longer under restraint, is thrust deep into the pocket, the right hand is in vigorous action, the voice rings out clear and distinct in the upper register, and sometimes the curiously arranged locks of hair are dislodged and fall in confusion about the head of the preacher. It is quite possible that those who heard the preacher in his latter days only may never have seen this display of energy or felt the immense personal magnetism of the orator;

but those who remember him in the early days of his Presidency, when he filled with a deeply interested congregation the "aching void" of the First Baptist Meeting House, will bear testimony both to the energy and magnetism of his pulpit oratory.

But while the manner of the preacher was striking, it was the matter of his discourse which made him pre-eminent. The delivery, though not a matter of indifference, was always subordinated, as it was, in fact, always secondary, to the thought. He was pre-eminently an instructive preacher. Not infrequently were his sermons packed with the results of the thinking of months and years. On special occasions he appeared a veritable giant in intellectual power. He chose the extemporaneous method of delivery, and those who have heard him try to preach from manuscript will readily admit that he made no mistake in this choice. But the extemporaneous method did not exempt him from careful preparation. His sermons were thoroughly analyzed and carefully elaborated in the study before they were delivered in the pulpit. It was only through the most exacting mental discipline and the most patient literary cultivation that he became the consummate master of unwritten discourse that he was. As he said himself, "It is not the naturally fluent man who makes in the end the best extemporaneous speaker."

His sermons in general were characterized by comprehensiveness of thought, by keenness of analysis, by sharp discrimination in definition, by clear, forceful, and elegant diction, by honesty and earnestness of purpose, and on occasion by tremendous power of appeal. Those who heard his first baccalaureate sermon from the text, "Christ, the wisdom of God," will not deny his power of impassioned utterance; while those who heard his sermon on College Fast Day from the text, "So they are without excuse," will bear witness to the overwhelming force of his pathetic appeal.

One other characteristic of his preaching, which may be specially commended in this presence, was what might be

called his intellectual honesty. His moral honesty was shown as, shunning all hypocrisy, he preached level with his convictions. His intellectual honesty he illustrated as, guarding against prejudice, he preached level with his thinking. At times the critical hearer, following a masterly discourse to its conclusion, might think the whole had not been told; questions might suggest themselves which the preacher had not answered. On second thought the critic would discover that some of these questions the preacher himself had started by his own relentless thinking, and on still deeper thought he would discover that frequently the failure to answer was due not so much to the poverty of the preacher's thinking as to the limitations of human thought. He thought as earnestly and as far as he could, and very few thought further; but where his thinking stopped, there his sermon stopped also. He did not urge upon the minds of his hearers what had failed to gain the assent of his own thinking mind. He knew but in part, and he was honest enough to prophesy but in part.

But great as was the preacher, the teacher was greater still. In the spring of 1853 Mr. Robinson accepted the invitation to Rochester, and entered upon the work of theological instruction, for which he was admirably fitted and in which he was pre-eminently successful. This is neither the place nor the hour to set forth specifically Dr. Robinson's work as a theologian. This service has been ably and loyally performed by his successor and quondam pupil, Dr. Augustus H. Strong, in the city where the theological instruction was imparted. But there are certain general characteristics of his theology which may be noted by those who did not study at his feet, and may be appreciated by those who have given no special attention to this department of science.

In general he was pre-eminently an investigator rather than a systematizer, or, to use his own word, a "systemizer." He believed that investigation must be carried to great lengths

before the work of systemization can be satisfactorily performed. He was too logical to be unsystematic, but his critical faculty was always hindering and interfering with the work of construction. If through his lack of complete system, and by reason of his dominant tendency to emphasize one phase of truth at a time, he sometimes laid himself open to the charge of inconsistency, he at least escaped some of the faults of the systemizers. If his mind was too critical to hastily construct a system, it was too honest to falsify facts or to minify truths. He would rather leave truths unarticulated in their native largeness than dwarf them in order to meet the demands of some exacting system.

In laying out his theology he avoided the mistake of those Dutch gardeners who laid out their paths with mathematical angularity and made trees and shrubs conform to preconceived geometric figures. If he came across a bold rock, he endeavored to bring the surrounding lawn into harmony with it; but did not chip away the rock in order to soften its outlines. If he found a peculiar tree, he trimmed it and sought to prepare for it a proper setting; but he did not prune it and cramp it into an unnatural shape. He was continually raking up the dead leaves of tradition and lopping off the dry twigs of lifeless dogma; but he always regarded Nature as his teacher, not as his pupil. In constructing his system he would rather build in a truth whose rugged outline marred the symmetry of the structure than dwarf that truth under the chisel until it should conform to his own pretty plan. If thus the architect discredited his own plan, he at least paid a tribute to the superior worth of the material with which he wrought.

Dr. Robinson believed in and taught a rational theology. He cared nothing for words except as they gave expression to reality. He was constantly looking through the formula to the fact, and discarding tradition for truth. He revered historic creeds, as statements of belief which have been formed after

profound experience and which signalize the victories and the progress of Christian truth; but he scouted the idea that any divine fact or truth can be exhaustively measured by finite minds, or that there has been or ever can be an ultimate dogma in theology. The Scriptures, as an organic whole, he considered as authoritative; but he reacted from that method of using particular proof-texts which prevents men from seeing the forest for the trees. Nor was he willing to accept statements of Scripture as so many algebraic formulas with which the theologian, after the manner of the mathematician, is to solve his problems. He was not willing simply to accept, as given, *a*, *b*, and *c*, or *x*, *y*, and *z*, and then to work out the problem. He wished to determine, first of all, what *a*, *b*, and *c*, *x*, *y*, and *z* really signify. He was not willing to posit Scriptural statements as unknown quantities; he sought for the immutable fact, the eternal verity, which underlies the statement and of which the statement is an inadequate expression. Discarding the rule that reason may guide us in examining the evidences of Divine revelation, but must be scrupulously abjured the moment we come to an examination of the truths which revelation declares, he inquired, "To what does revelation address itself if not to our reason and our conscience? In the name of reason, for what was reason given us if not to be employed on the highest thoughts and the noblest ends that can engage our attention?"

Again, he believed in and taught a progressive theology. Before the name became familiar, he represented the movement which has since been denominated the New Theology. He was in advance of most of his contemporaries in welcoming the discoveries and paying earnest heed to the teachings of physical science. He was constantly modifying his own views, was quick to detect the way to fresh discovery, and anticipated the modifications which the new revelations of the age have effected in theology. His ablest students affirm that,

in the modifications which they have been compelled to make within the last twenty-five years, they have but followed the lines of thought indicated by Dr. Robinson to his students from twenty to forty years ago. To quote from Dr. Strong, "Twenty-five years ago Dr. Robinson probably taught in the Rochester Theological Seminary a more modern doctrine than was at that time taught in any other evangelical seminary of any denomination whatever. His students can never blame him for not being abreast of his time, for he was greatly ahead of his time."

Not as a matter of prime importance, but as a matter of general interest, we may draw comparison between the views of Dr. Robinson and current views as to the sources of divine authority. Three or four years ago a professor in Union Theological Seminary startled and astounded his Presbyterian brethren by the declaration, "There are, historically, three great fountains of Divine authority—the Bible, the Church, and the Reason." In a sermon published in 1867, which had been previously preached in the city of New York, Dr. Robinson taught, "For traditional Churchism and for traditional Protestantism, as well as for callow Rationalism, there remains but one safe and abiding resource, and that is the Church and the Bible—the Bible as understood, and believed in, and scientifically expounded, by the universal and divinely sanctified reason of the Church of the living God." What was boldly and perhaps too unguardedly stated, amid great flourish of trumpets, in the seminary in New York in 1891, had been much more quietly taught, in essence, in the seminary in Rochester twenty-five years before. Happily the Baptist divine, though vigorously assaulted by individuals, could not be confronted by any authoritative statement of belief short of the sacred Scriptures themselves.

Great as was Dr. Robinson's work as a theologian, his work was still greater as a teacher of theology. The testi-

mony of his pupils is strong, concurrent, enthusiastic, and convincing with regard to his transcendent ability as a teacher. Doubtless the most brilliant, the best, and most permanently effective work of his life was that which he performed while occupying the chair of theology in Rochester. His method was Socratic. By his keen questions he aroused his students from their dogmatic slumbers; by his personal magnetism and strong intellectuality he led them to discover themselves, and quickened them into newness of intellectual life; while the vital themes he presented sank deep into their hearts and were wrought into the very fibres of their moral and religious nature. To quote again from Dr. Strong, "The impulse to clear and manly utterance in the pulpit, the love of exact statement, the disposition to preach truth rather than tradition, which have of late years transformed our Baptist pulpit and brought it abreast of our advancing age, have been chiefly due, under God, to the teaching and the example of Dr. Robinson."

This brilliant and eminent success in the chair of theology made Dr. Robinson a marked man in educational circles; and it is not surprising that when Brown University was looking for some able and progressive man to become her head she should turn with longing eyes to the eminent teacher at Rochester. Alma Mater extended a call to her brilliant and distinguished son, and he loyally responded, assuming the duties of the Presidency in the fall of 1872.

The college at that time did not hold a very advanced position. Many who are present to-day will recall the condition of the old buildings. The rooms in the two dormitories were unattractive and really disreputable, the recitation-rooms were small, crowded, and ill-ventilated, while there was but one scientific department which was at all adequately equipped for laboratory work. Those who came to college at that time from good preparatory schools will remember how low were the requirements of admission, how wretchedly poor was the prepa-

ration of many of the students, and how exceedingly slow was the progress in instruction. The work of the professors with the lower classes was hampered by the poor preparation of the students; and to the well-trained student stimulus and inspiration were not abundant until the latter part of the course. The college in its material and intellectual condition needed regeneration, and demanded close attention and self-denying effort from the incoming President. To the work which lay before him he consecrated all his powers, under that stern conviction of duty which dominated his life. Appealing to the Alumni on his arrival, he said, "I come responsive to the call of our old Mother. If I do my duty, I shall expect your help. If I fail to do my duty, I shall not be worthy of that help."

At the beginning, as always, he was keen to see the needs of the college. In his first report to the corporation, in 1873, he appeals for better recitation-rooms, for better provision for the library, for the extension of Rhode Island Hall in order to give room for the work of a physical laboratory, and for a gymnasium. Then, turning his attention to the curriculum, he recommends that more attention be paid to the modern languages and to the natural sciences, and, in order to this, urges the raising of the requirements for admission. The next year he calls attention to the need in our college, as in colleges generally, of paying more attention to the study of the English language. Thus at the very start he staked out the road along which he purposed that the college should advance. But progress was slow for lack of the sinews of war. Unfortunately, just when he wanted money to carry out his progressive ideas, he was confronted by the financial depression of 1873; and the iteration of the University's needs, in the recurrent reports of the President, is truly pathetic. But there was no sign of surrender, there was no abatement of purpose; and as the result of steady, persistent, hard work,

marked advance was made along the lines which he had indicated. The requirements of admission were raised until at one time they were said to be in advance of the requirements in colleges generally; more room was provided in the curriculum for the modern languages and the natural sciences; and, in harmony with the insistent purpose of the President, better equipment was provided for the application of science to the arts.

Towards the latter part of his administration he urged more strongly an enlarged attention to the study of English; presented a plan by which young women might share in the advantages of the University; and earnestly strove, in spite of opposition, for the extension of the work of the University, so that students might here pursue post-graduate studies and receive from their Alma Mater the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The first and second recommendations were not carried out until the present administration; but he was rewarded for his contention in defense of the last recommendation as he enjoyed the privilege, at his last Commencement, of awarding diplomas to two young men who had earned the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by studies prosecuted under the direction of professors in this University.

In outward condition, although the rate of movement was slow at the start, improvements were made later with accelerating rapidity. Indeed, the college showed greater material advance during the administration of Dr. Robinson than at any other period of its history. The grounds were greatly improved. The front campus was transformed from a hay-field into an attractive lawn overshadowed by its beautiful elms; the middle campus was graded, sodded, and paved; and the field of athletic sports was transferred to the lower campus, which had arisen out of a swamp. The University came to be much better housed and equipped. Rhode Island Hall was extended; University Hall was renovated; the Library,

Sayles Memorial Hall, and Slater Hall were erected; Wilson Hall was begun; the Ladd Observatory was promised, and the money for the Lyman Gymnasium was in hand; and while this better equipment was secured, the funds of the college had been increased, speaking in round numbers, from $550,000 to $1,000,000. When we reflect that all this was done in spite of the President's confessed lack of tact in dealing with men, and in face of obstructions raised by a divided corporation, we find in these gratifying results abundant evidence of the persistent purpose and unflinching fidelity of the President, and a substantial expression of the respect and confidence which his abilities and character inspired in the community at large. The words of his resignation are more strictly true than such words often are: "I am now the more ready to retire because the prospects of the University have at no time since my connection with it been so encouraging as they are now, and because it is now in a condition from which, under wise guidance and with such changes as in due course of events will necessarily come, it can rapidly advance to a measure of usefulness not hitherto attainable."

But the administration of a college imposes other duties besides those of providing equipment and arranging curriculum. President Robinson had a deep concern for the moral welfare of his students, and regarded the discipline of the college as supremely important. All questions affecting the physical, intellectual, or social life of the students he gravely considered in their moral bearings. His concern for the moral character of the students was deep, strong, and tender; and yet, in specific cases of discipline, he was not always happy. Not unfrequently did he lose influence, when in conference with offenders, by laying himself open to the satirical charge of knowing too many things that were not so. Unable, by reason of his reserve, to secure the confidence and love of the

students who most needed discipline, he sometimes, by his stern demeanor, failed to compass the ends which he was seeking to attain. As a stern prophet of righteousness, and as himself an heroic example of submission to law, he is worthy of surpassing honor, and we gladly apply to him such high encomium as the Great Teacher passed upon his forerunner, "Among them that are born of woman there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist," though we cannot but be reminded of the Great Teacher's modification, "He that is less in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

And yet in truth it should be added, that he who was so stern in the public proclamation of the law was apt to become even too tender when approached with an appeal in behalf of the individual offender. The character which on its obverse side was bright with supreme love of the law, on its reverse side glowed with sympathetic interest in the transgressor. Resembling Jupiter Tonans in the awful promulgation of law, he was far from resembling Rhadamanthus in its heartless execution. If this susceptibility to appeal does not bear witness to the excellence of his discipline, may we not accept its testimony as to the tenderness of his heart?

But while there were some infelicities in particular cases, the general discipline of the college at large was efficient and wholesome. The President came to recognize that boyish pranks are not always heinous offences; and the students, under a growing and more enlightened public opinion, relinquished some of the traditional customs of former times, and accepted the modern in place of the medieval standard of academic manners. But the most wholesome disciplinary influence was that exerted by the example of industry, high moral purpose, and constant devotion to duty which the President himself afforded. Under this inspiring influence the aims of the students were heightened, and the spirit of devotion to study was very greatly increased.

During his entire administration, Dr. Robinson, while taxed with administrative duties, was engaged in teaching five or six hours a week, and was expected to cover the ground which is now traversed by three men. Surely he must be blessed with extraordinary vitality who can stand the constantly increasing burden of administration, and still bring to the lecture-room the exuberant spirit which is required for the most magnetic teaching. That he so successfully met these excessive and increasing demands, notwithstanding his advancing years, redounds very greatly to his credit. Many are the Alumni of Brown who to-day are happy to testify that under the teaching of Dr. Robinson they received the deepest inspiration which came to them in their entire educational course. If his teaching in Brown was not always so eminently successful as that in Rochester, it may be remembered that in Brown he was dealing with younger men, while he himself was an older man. The increased difference in age may very naturally have made him less tolerant of disagreement, while the deepening confidence in the truth of his own views made him more dogmatic in their promulgation. And possibly, a sensitive jealousy of the prerogative of the executive may have resulted, at times, and with certain classes, in an unwarranted assertion of the authority of the teacher. Or, with far more probability, the increasing irritation of the annoying details of administration may have made large drains on the vitality essential to enthusiastic teaching. In view of all the circumstances, enthusiastic pupils of earlier days may not refuse credit to the testimony of later classes that, with diminishing freedom of discussion, his teaching became more dogmatic and, consequently, less inspiring.

But the teaching in Brown was glorious, even though the teaching in Rochester excelled in glory. The teacher demanded strong and accurate thinking. He called for exact definition. "Do not juggle with words, gentlemen," was his

oft-repeated caution. "Just what do you mean by that?" was his constantly recurring challenge. And, though the question was doubtless sometimes asked as a subterfuge beneath which the teacher might elude an embarrassing question, it was nevertheless a fair exponent of his own mental habit. He was determined, if possible, not to be deceived by words, and he sought, so far as possible, to remove from essential truth the veil with which words so often obscure it. He wanted to know what the sign signified.

I think it will be generally admitted that his work in moral philosophy was more effective than that in intellectual philosophy. Very few students, perhaps no earnest student, could fail to carry away a deep impression from Dr. Robinson's instruction in ethics. He spent but little time in practical application; but he sought to ground his pupils in scientific principles, on the basis of immutable truth. The teachings most deeply impressed were the immutability of the moral law (and, penalty as a reaction from violated law); the nature (and not simply the will) of the Supreme Being as the ultimate ground of virtue; and conscience as, strictly defined, neither legislative nor prophetic, but, rather, as the supreme, though not infallible, "moral judiciary of the soul."

His careful definition was of great benefit in giving to the pupil solid ground on which to stand. The ethical universe remained no longer chaotic, inchoate, an earth without form and void, illumined by light transfused through an omnipresent mist; but, under his teaching, dry land began to appear in the midst of the waters, and sun, moon, and stars shone out as distinct luminaries in the ethical firmament. Students who have continued to prosecute their studies, for instance on the subject of conscience, after being surprised to see how vaguely and without precise definition that term is used even by writers of eminence, have come to feel a deeper gratitude to their college instructor for his sharp definition. They may perhaps think

that the definition given was not sufficiently comprehensive; but that definition has risen, amid the haziness which seems to enwrap many ethical writers, like the island which Kant saw outlined amid the restless waters, the obscuring mists, and the dissolving phantoms of a wide and stormy ocean.

But no estimate of the teaching would be adequate which failed to take account of the teacher. One might read his books or papers, and commend or condemn what he read; but he could form no adequate conception of the power of the teacher in his class-room. The man was in his teaching, the living truth was in the man; therefore his teaching did not simply add to the intellectual capital of the pupil, it became an element in that pupil's moral life. His words printed in a book are valuable; but they are far inferior to the words which flowed from his lips, glowing with the heat of his own internal fires, the living carriers of his living spirit. Other men might repeat his formulas, but they could not impart his teaching. In his best moods his class-room was a forge, where, in the fires of his own intense thinking, heated seven times hotter under the blast of free discussion, the cold iron of traditional notion was fused, and then taken out, hot and fluent, to be fashioned anew under the hammers of master-workman and apprentice alike; or, to change the figure, that class-room was a palaestra, where he who wrestled the best enjoyed the fullest discipline and received the richest reward, as he carried away his "apples of gold in pictures of silver." In this contest the law obtained, that to him that hath shall be given; and it was perhaps in part owing to their inferior strength and skill that the younger students of the college did not always reap so large a benefit as the older students of the seminary. He was an exceptional teacher. He has been termed, by one who himself is an eminent instructor, the greatest teacher of his generation; and as we consider the number and the character of those who to-day are enthusiastic in

their testimony to the educational uplift and intellectual inspiration which they received from him, we must place his name very high upon the roll of those who have served their day and generation.

The preacher, the administrator, the teacher, demands our admiration, but still more admirable is the man himself. Towering above many in physical stature, he towered also in intellectual power and moral character. On the physical side of his nature he was endowed with a striking personal presence and a wiry, well-knit bodily frame. But these were only the physical setting of pre-eminent intellectual power. Experiencing his mental quickening comparatively late in life, he was at a disadvantage in comparison with those who had made large acquisition in youth. Securing his results not so much by the soaring flights of an intuitive genius as by the steady onward march of an acute and powerful intellect, he may not have attained to the wide learning and generous culture of some with whom his eminent powers brought him into comparison. But if others surpassed him in filling the chambers of memory with accumulated information, he surpassed others in developing and toughening the very fibres of the intellectual nature; for whatever may have been the possessions of his mind, and they were by no means meagre, the mind itself was made a powerful instrument. If he acquired less than some, he assimilated more than most.*

His paramount mental characteristic was his power of analysis. His mind was a crucible, in which, when heated by the intense fires of his intellectual nature, thoughts were readily resolved into their constituent elements. But he was by no

*The scholarship which was generally acknowledged wherever he was known, was officially recognized by his Alma Mater, which conferred upon him in 1853 the degree of Doctor of Divinity, and in 1872 the Degree of Doctor of Laws; and by Harvard University, which conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Laws on the occasion of her two hundred and fiftieth anniversary, in 1886.

means lacking in synthetic power. This was seen in his well-constructed sermons and in the broad generalizations and brilliant inductions of his theology; but the analytic dominated the synthetic, as is evident from the fact that his theology was never thoroughly systemized.

Dr. Robinson left but few published works;* but while we may regret that we have so little from his pen, we know that the best part of Dr. Robinson could never be published; for the greatest privilege which his students enjoyed was not the clear exposition of the teacher's thought but rather the stimulating exercise of joining with their teacher in searching the universe for abiding facts, immutable laws, eternal life.

But the moral man is grander than the man of intellect, and the moral character of him whom we honor demands a higher admiration than his intellectual power. Faults there were; but the aim was high, the motives noble, the heart sincere—in a word, the man was honest. Indeed, it was his honesty which gave prominence to some his faults. While others, screening greater faults behind fairer exteriors, might be worse than they appeared, he, hating all shams and opposed to all indirection, sometimes gave too free expression to his nature, and appeared worse than he really was. It is in recognition of this trait that many of his associates and acquaintances, who cannot but condemn his indulgence in unbridled speech, have come to regard even the words which burned and blistered, as sparks struck out by friction upon the surface rather than as bolts forged in the central fires. While

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*His chief literary remains are a translation of Neander's Planting and Training of the Christian Church, his Yale Lectures on Preaching, and his Principles and Practice of Morality, together with shorter articles in magazines, notably in the "Christian Review," of which he was Editor from 1859 to 1864. Just at the present time there issues from the press a limited edition of his Christian Theology, which is chiefly a republication of his lectures as prepared for the use of his students in Rochester prior to the year 1872.

they deplore the habit as unworthy, and as circumscribing the moral influence of the man, they readily admit that the heart was not so venomous as the caustic tongue might seem to imply. Dr. Robinson had a more kindly heart than many were led to suppose, but it was a heart to be taken by storm. Many, daunted by the thunder of the guns which bristled on the parapet, were fain to desist from further attack; but those who pressed into the interior rejoiced to find an atmosphere of peace, where the brilliant light of lustrous intellect was interfused with the genial warmth of glowing affection.

In this exalted moral character a most prominent characteristic was tremendous power of will. The man's whole countenance betokened a dominant, imperious will. The strong forehead, the eye with its straight-forward, piercing glance, the prominent nose, the firm lips with their scissors-like movement, and the full, prominent chin, all were indicative of high purpose and concentrated energy. It was this will which, to use language he himself might use, collared his mind and held it down to the grindstone; it was this that demanded a hard day's work every day; it was this that held the passions and appetites of the man subservient to the moral law, and made the man bow in unaffected humility before the ideal of excellence which shines in the face of Jesus Christ.

But this mighty energy was associated with a stern sense of moral obligation. This will was not prostituted to low ends. It was not self-will. It recognized a law to be obeyed, and it held the man in its grip until he rendered obedience. As in the tremendous energy of will we discover the centrifugal force, so in the high moral ideal we discover the centripetal force, which determined the orbit of his life. The same will which showed its mastership in commanding all the faculties of the soul, manifested its true temper in its loyal submission to the moral ideal presented in the character of Jesus Christ. Dr. Robinson honored Christ. He found in Him the most

complete objective transcript of the nature of the Eternal God; and to follow His teaching and to be swayed by His spirit was the deepest purpose of his heart. To be sure, it is what we may call the more masculine virtues of Christ that he honored the most and was most successful in imitating. Reacting from a sentimental conception of Christ, which wrested God's mercy and love to the emasculation if not to the destruction of moral character, he, in accordance with the bent of his nature, laid the greater emphasis on Christ's revelation of the unswerving justice and infinite holiness of God. His Christ loved, but that love was a moral, holy, transforming love. His Christ was a worthy ideal for a strong, completely developed man, an ideal which a man might accept without ceasing to rejoice in his strength. But again and again in his preaching, and we doubt not in his life, the virtues in Christ which the strong man so often lacks were insisted on as essential elements of a complete ideal, and consequently as essential elements of a perfect life.

In this high moral ideal we find the dominant regulating force of his life. He honestly endeavored with great force of will to subdue his strong nature to this high moral ideal. And if, occasionally, some of the forces of that virile nature slipped the leash and disported as vices, the very failure helps to a truer appreciation of the strong character which ordinarily held those vigorous forces under the restraint of virtue. If in dealing with men he was sometimes impatient of opposition, and perhaps too ready to override opposers, it was because the impetuous power of will, which overcame all kinds of obstacles in himself and in his environment and made him the powerful man that he was, escaped for the time the restraint which the rights of others impose on the execution of one's own purpose however worthy that purpose may be. If, again, his judgments, signally clear, and often more just than the vanity of men allowed them to admit, were sometimes uncharitable, it was

because the high moral standard which he so vigorously applied to himself in his strength, was sometimes applied with too little sympathy to others in their weakness.

As in the life of Dr. Robinson we discover in striking combination tremendous energy of will and high sense of moral obligation, we also discover in that life a not unhappy union of pride and humility. Probably no human pride is virtue unalloyed. But there is a pride which savors more of virtue than of vice. Essential manhood is worthy of respect. The Almighty has placed man's head erect upon his shoulders; He has "made him a little lower than God, and has put all things under his feet"; the great moral teacher of the ages inculcates self-respect as he instructs man to love his neighbor as himself. If a man's neighbor is worthy of love because he bears the image of the Almighty Creator, because he is a protegé of the Holy Redeemer and a child of the Eternal Father, surely the man himself is worthy of respect and love for the same reasons. In the philosophic, Christian sense, Dr. Robinson was exceeding proud. He had abundant self-respect; he had little self-conceit. His pride was akin to the awe with which Kant reflected upon the moral law within, and differed heaven-wide from that Narcissus-like vanity which pines away in admiration of its adventitious and ephemeral beauty.

This pride, however, retained its virtue and was raised from the level of the stoic philosophy to the higher elevation of the Christian religion, as it was mated to humility. Humility, with him, was not cringing before one's fellows and asking their pardon for one's existence; it was not an undue depreciation of self; it was, rather, a just appreciation of another and a worthier, in comparison with whom self seems but little. Dr. Robinson bared his head before the Almighty. He walked humbly before his God. Often have we seen him, at Commencement, stand with academic hat upon his head while conferring degrees as President of the college, and then, in a

moment, uncover his head, and with unaffected humility bow before the throne of heavenly grace. That two-fold picture was symbolical of his character. Jealous of his dignity, claiming every iota of respect that was due to his position from men, he yet bowed with unaffected humility and with most sincere adoration before his God. He believed as he preached, that God is not to be trifled with. His reverent humility was most strikingly illustrated in prayer. The reverence in posture was but the physical exponent of the spirit of him who prayed. His prayers were remarkable. Characterized by freshness of thought and variety of diction, they came forth, morning after morning, fresh as the sunrise, and rose as the out-breathings of an adoring soul who, revering the transcendent worth of the Being on Whom he confesses his dependence, humbly asks to be quickened by His spirit, and ardently yearns to become partaker of His nature.

It was in the closing period of life that the true nobility of this character found fullest and most beautiful expression. The prophecy of the Psalmist was fulfilled: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon, he shall bring forth fruit in old age." Although Dr. Robinson was seventy-four years of age when he laid aside his duties as President of Brown University, his work was not yet done In response to the call of honor and of duty the stern believer in moral law, the loyal servant of Jesus Christ, again took up his burden and pressed onward toward the goal. Though he was sifted as wheat, his faith failed not. He continued to fight the good fight until he finished his course. Continuing his intellectual toil, he devoted himself to the work of preaching and lecturing, until he again entered the teacher's chair as Professor of Ethics and Apologetics in the University of Chicago, where he remained until he was removed by death on the thirteenth of June in the present year. It was in this autumnal season that the peaceable fruits of righteousness

most rapidly matured. The discipline of sorrow seemed to beautify the character which the discipline of work had made strong. The nature was mellowed, and truth took on deeper significance in response to profounder cravings of the heart. That heart which had been so jealously guarded through life, now overflowed, and even gave public expression of its deeper feeling in more tender, sweeter, and more affectionate presentations of gospel truth. Those who listened to his ministrations from the pulpit in his latter days, mingled with the words of admiration which he was accustomed to command, the expression of personal affection which he had not been so wont to elicit. As one says who knew him from his student days, "Dr. Robinson was a growing man, all through his life; as he grew older he mellowed in manner and, I think, in spirit. His greatest work was done at Rochester; but he himself was a larger man after leaving Brown."

This growth continued even to the end; indeed it seems to have become more rapid as the culmination approached. The character which has been steadily and sturdily growing in early and more mature manhood, effloresces in old age. As the century-plant, after strengthening its leaves for decades, rapidly bursts into bloom; as the clouds which have been hanging in the western sky all the afternoon are suddenly irradiated with the glory of the setting sun; so this character, which had been long strengthening, is suddenly robed in beauty and reflects the glories of a higher world. The column has been piled stone upon stone, with severe and unremitting toil, the surface has been chiseled with painstaking diligence and skill, and now the finishing touch is given, as the lily is carved at the top of the pillar, and strength is crowned with beauty.

We come to this service not to heap with flowers the bier of the dead, but to contemplate once more the character of the living. We come not in partial blindness to overlook ex-

isting faults, but we come with open vision to admire exceeding virtue. The noble character which stands before us needs no screen, and we hesitate not to drop the veil and let the man appear as he was. We may discover dark lines of shadow which suggest the earthly and the human; but we see also broad surfaces of light which are eloquent of the heavenly and divine. We welcome the privilege which the quiet of this hour affords to take one more long, loving, lingering look at the face whose image is so clearly impressed on the tablets of memory. How strong that face! How grand the character which illumines it! It is the face of one who hated a lie; it is the face of one who would scorn to sell his birthright as a son of God, of one who loved the truth and always welcomed the light; it is a face made luminous with the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. On that brow and above those features, a chaplet of flowers would seem incongruous, and we do not bring it. The only appropriate garland would be the simple wreath of the Greeks, which borrowed its lustre from the valor of him who wore it. Such victor's palm we award to-day, with the assured belief that the righteous Judge has granted the crown of life that fadeth not away.